

## **BARRIERS TO TEACHER COMMUNICATION WITH PASTORALIST PARENTS IN RURAL MONGOLIA**

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*Keywords:* pastoralism; teacher education; qualitative study

In the last 40 years, parental involvement in children's learning has been considered as an important element of effective education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Research shows that parental involvement is beneficial not only to children, but also to parents and teachers, yielding results in improved school attendance, attitudes, behavior, and mental health of children; improved parent-teacher relationships, with increased parental confidence, satisfaction and interest in education; and improved teacher morale and school climate (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). In order to achieve good parental involvement, school and family should confront barriers and form good two-way communication, 'having the child as the common object of interest' (Gastaldi, Longobardi, Quaglia, & Settanni, 2015, p.100). Mongolian education policy emphasizes the importance of parental involvement and school-family communication in teaching and learning through the recent education policy documents (Sukhbaatar, 2018). However, communicating and partnering with pastoralist parents seems to be much harder for schools and teachers since these children and families are separated during the school year due to their special nomadic lifestyle. The current study explored barriers faced by primary education classroom teachers when they communicated with pastoralist parents in a rural Mongolian school. This interpretive phenomenological study invited six teachers to take part in in-depth interviews. An interview guide was adapted from a previous study (Farrell & Collier, 2010) for the purpose of the study. An interpretive phenomenological analysis was employed. Four subordinate themes emerged from the data that corresponded roughly with Hornby and Lafaele's (2010) model of factors acting as barriers to parental involvement. The themes, which represented classroom teachers' interpretations of barriers they experienced in communicating with pastoralist parents, were labeled following the model. The four themes were: (1) parent and family factors, (2) child factors, (3) parent-teacher factors, and (4) societal factors. This study concludes with some ideas to improve teacher education.

*This research was supported by the Civil Society Scholar Award (Grant Number IN2017-37074) of the Open Society Foundation.*